

In the Specification

In the specification, please amend paragraph [0023] as follows:

[0023] The first thickness may comprise an original thickness of the pellicle plate, whereby the third thickness of the perimeter frame also ~~of~~-comprises such original thickness. Alternatively, the perimeter frame of the pellicle plate may be adjusted for a standoff distance between the monolithic optical pellicle and a photomask to which the monolithic optical pellicle is to be mounted. This is accomplished by the perimeter frame initially having the first thickness, and removing a predetermined thickness from the first thickness of the perimeter frame to provide the perimeter frame with the third thickness, which is less than the first thickness. The second thickness of the recessed portion is preferably at least thick enough to prevent sagging of the recessed portion due to applied forces on the monolithic optical pellicle.

In the specification, please amend paragraph [0025] as follows:

[0025] The present monolithic optical pellicle is further planarized on first and second surfaces thereof to provide the pellicle with first and second optically flat surfaces. A plurality of openings may be ~~proved~~provided that traverse through the perimeter frame for introducing a gas flow over the recessed portion of the pellicle plate.

In the specification, please amend paragraph [0041] as follows:

[0041] Once the mask 50 has been provided on the pellicle plate 10, surface areas 12 of pellicle plate 10 exposed through mask 50 are then removed to a desired depth within the pellicle plate 10 to form monolithic pellicle 20, as is shown in Figs. 2A-D. This is preferably

accomplished by providing a plasma over the structure of Fig. 1B whereby the plasma is adapted to remove only those exposed areas 12 of pellicle plate 10 to the desired depth, while leaving both the mask 50 and the pellicle plate 10 material residing ~~there-under~~thereunder substantially intact. For example, a bulk portion of the pellicle plate 10 may be removed by milling using a plasma-assisted chemical etch within the process chamber.

In the specification, please amend paragraph [0055] as follows:

[0055] Thus, in accordance with the invention, the present monolithic pellicle 20 is integrally formed as a single, one-piece optical pellicle portion and frame portion that is particularly useful at or below 157nm exposure wavelengths. As it is structurally a single, one-piece monolithic pellicle formed from a single pellicle plate, it avoids the conventional need for bonding a frame to an optical pellicle, as well as avoids material mismatch between the frame portion and optical pellicle portion. The monolithic pellicle 20 comprises a single material such that it has a single thermal expansion. Wherein the monolithic pellicle 20 includes a marker layer, the concentration of marker layer material is insignificantly small relative to the host material, i.e., the transparent material of the pellicle, such that marker layer material has essentially no measurable affect on the thermal properties. The monolithic pellicle 20 has inherently low stress levels due to its single thermal expansion, and is sufficiently robust to withstand any stresses endured as a result of mounting and/or remounting in mask manufacturing. Additionally, the hard monolithic pellicle 20 of the invention achieves advantages over the prior art by eliminating the need to bond an optical plate to a frame, and thereby reducing any risk of generating distortions or birefringence in the photomask to which it is mounted. Due to the present monolithic pellicle one-piece structure, it beneficially has an

extended useful life as compared to conventional pellicies having a frame attached to an optical pellicle, which easily detach from one another, damage and/or distort thereby ending the conventional ~~pellicle's~~pellicle's useful life.